



TROPHY SERIES/OPEN

2026 QUALIFIER/OPEN TOURNAMENTS

RULES & RELEASE

The Striped Bass Challenge (SBC) will conduct its tournaments as described in
2026 Trophy Series/Open Launch Information

2026 Trophy Series/Open Information and as follows:

- 1. Interpretation & Enforcement:** Interpretation of these rules will be left exclusively to the Tournament Director. Decisions of the Tournament Director (“Director”) are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal.
- 2. Release.** By participating in the Tournaments, each participant and winner waives any and all claims of liability against SBC, its employees, and agents, SBC’s sponsors and their respective employees and agents, for any personal injury or loss which may occur from the conduct of, or participation in, the tournament, or from the use of any prize. Registration and/or participation in the event indicates that the participants agree to all tournament rules and agree to hold the SBC and any entity affiliated with the SBC harmless in the event of accident, **injury, illness or death** incurred during the event or related to the tournament events.
- 3. Publicity; Use of Personal Information.** By participating, where allowed by law, all participants and winner(s) grant SBC exclusive permission to use their names, characters, photographs, voices, videotape, and likenesses in connection with promotion of this and other SBC events and waive any claims to royalty, right, or remuneration for such use.



4. Taxes. Any valuation of prize(s) is based on available information provided to SBC, and the value of any prize awarded to a winner may be reported for tax purposes as required by law. Each winner is solely responsible for reporting and paying any and all applicable taxes related to the prize(s) and paying any expenses associated with any prize which are not specifically provided for in the official rules. ***Each monetary prize winner must provide SBC with valid identification and a valid taxpayer identification number or social security number before any prize will be awarded.***

5. Competition Participation & Payback: There is two competition divisions. At least 100% of proceeds will be paid back less PayPal processing fees, administrative fees and 10% for TOTY/Championship.

Open Tournament

- a. The entry fee is \$150 per boat for each of the four open tournaments. A maximum of four (4) adult team members may be on the boat with additional youth. (Youth are unlimited)
- b. Payout is guaranteed for Open tournament 1st place winner. Additional Payouts are Based on the total number of entries.
- c. The entry fee for Big Fish Side Pot is \$50. (80% payback)

Trophy Series

- d. The entry fee is \$350 per boat for each of the four tournaments in the Trophy Series. A maximum of four (4) adult team members may be on the boat with additional youth. (Youth are unlimited)
- e. Payout is guaranteed for Trophy Series 1st place winner. Payout for 2nd through 10th places are based on the total number of entries.
- f. The entry fee for Big Fish Side Pot is \$50. (80% payback)



6. Lake Limits: Fish entered must be caught only from the Lake Proper. The Lake Proper has no off-limits period prior to the event. The boundaries of the Lake Proper shall be defined as navigable waters to include rivers and creeks leading to the Lake Proper. The SBC reserves the right to set additional boundaries when deemed in the best interest of the organization. **In such cases, the boundaries will be determined and announced prior to the close of the captain's meeting.**

7. Weigh In: The captain must accompany fish to the weigh station and be present at the weigh station unless the Director has approved a designated representative to act in the captain's stead due to an emergency. Only two (2) legal fish will be weighed in. Captains (or their approved designated representative) **MUST** sign the weigh in form.

8. Registration: The 4 open tournaments are individual tournaments in conjunction of Trophy Series

The Trophy Series is 4 tournament qualifiers plus Championship format. Registration into the series constitutes entry and commitment into at all 4 tournaments in the series. There will be a \$100 membership fee per boat who wants to be eligible for TOTY or Top 25, that will be added to top 25 Champion payout. You must fish all 4 tournaments and finish in top 25 in TOTY points to fish Championship. Online registration will be open for first tournaments on November 15, 2025, until November 30, 2025. Registrations may be paid by check provided entries are RECEIVED on or before November 30, 2025. Each team must register during the open registration period for each tournament in order to compete. All Tournament fees must be paid 2 weeks before each tournament.



9. Pre-tournament captains' meeting: All teams must CHECK IN at the captains meeting the night before tournament. The time of the meeting will be announced after registration is closed. Failure of the Captain or representative to attend the captain's meeting may, at the sole discretion of the Director, render a team ineligible to compete.

10. Acceptable Species: Any species of the true bass family (striped bass, hybrid striped bass, white bass, yellow bass, etc.) may be weighed in provided they comply with every applicable state and local ordinance. **Live fish will get priority at weigh-in. All fish brought to the tournament area MUST be in a container not visible to the public.**

11. Tournament Scoring: Scoring is determined by the total weight of the fish weighed in. Measurement will be in pounds and tenths. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in any fish. In the event of a tie in the two (2) fish tournament the largest fish will determine the place the team will receive. In the event of a tie for any prize the winner will be the team with the greatest overall team weight. If the boats or anglers are still tied the ultimate tiebreaker will be a coin toss conducted by the Director.

12. Insurance: It is the responsibility of the team captain to comply with all state and local governments' liability insurance requirements. Proof of Liability insurance, if required by the local and state governments, may be requested by the Director from any team. The SBC does not require liability insurance other than that mandated by state and local governments.

13. Protests: Any protest against contestants must be filed in writing with the Director. Protests against any team or competitor must be made within ten minutes of the last weigh in. Protests must be accompanied by a \$150 cash protest



bond. Teams may not join together in protest. All written protests must state the specifics of the protest. If the protest is upheld the protest bond money is returned. If the protest is not upheld the protest bond will be donated to the community food bank with which the SBC is partnered.

14. Polygraph: Each contestant, by entry into this Tournament, consents to take and pass a polygraph exam to be eligible to win any prize including cash or merchandise. There will be a polygraph exam at every tournament

15. Conduct and Decisions: By participating in the tournaments, participants agree to be bound by the decisions of the Director. Persons who violate any rule, gain unfair advantage in participating in the tournament, or obtain winner status using fraudulent means will be disqualified. SBC requires participants to abide by all federal, state, and local governing laws and regulations. Any team receiving a citation from any law enforcement official during the tournament event hours may be disqualified at the sole discretion of the Director. Any contestant showing signs of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol or who operates a boat in a manner which might endanger others, will be disqualified. Public consumption of alcohol during the Weigh in and Captain's dinner is prohibited. Unsportsmanlike, disruptive, annoying, harassing, or threatening behavior is prohibited and weight penalties and/or disqualification may be imposed at the discretion of the Director.

16. Safety Protocol: Life Jackets must be worn while boat is underway.



2026 Trophy Series/Open Launch Information

Qualifier/Open tournaments will be “lines in the water” with tournament hours announced at the captain’s dinner. Teams are allowed to launch at the boat ramp of their choosing.

2026 Trophy Series/Open tournaments Return Information

This is a Live fish weigh in

The penalty for a dead fish at weigh in is 10% of the fish weight.

If you catch a fish that you think is a contender and you want to go ahead and get it weighed and released as soon as possible you may do so at any time after 2:00 pm. The weight will be entered and photos of the fish taken and the fish released.

ALL TEAMS MUST BE CHECKED IN BEFORE TBD

NO TEAM WILL BE CHECKED IN AFTER TBD

The penalty for missing your check in time is disqualification. Teams late to return may have the penalty waived at the sole discretion of the tournament director for an emergency circumstance.

2026 Trophy Series

TEAM OF THE YEAR

1. Teams are strongly encouraged to declare their teams and team captain at or prior to the first tournament in December this is the first in the TOTY Trophy series.



2. Team of the Year scoring is based on where a team places relative to other participating teams fishing for TOTY trophy series for the 4 team tournament events throughout the year.

3. The first-place team in each tournament shall receive 500 points. The 2nd place team shall receive 490 points with each place below earning five less points (points = $500 - (\text{place} \times 5)$). For teams that tie in total weight, the weight of the largest fish shall be used to break the tie. Teams that participate but do not weigh any fish will all be awarded the points for one place lower than the team with the smallest creel. Team must come to weigh-in to receive points. A participating team with no fish cannot receive more than 10th place points. Bonus 10 points for biggest fish of tournament.

4. Team member additions and substitutions are allowed at the captain's discretion for any tournament provided the tournament director is informed of changes prior to the tournament (must be a family member of one of the 4-member team)

5. Team of the Year will receive a plaque honoring the accomplishment. Additional prizes or Cash may be awarded based on sponsorship of the yearlong competition and 5% of entry fees.

Upon presentation of a team's creel for weigh-in, the team designee shall give the Tournament Director(s) a fully completed weigh-in sheet. To receive TOTY points the team and/or a member of the team must be present at the weigh-in and must submit a completed team weigh-in sheet to the Tournament Director(s) at the weigh-in. Tournament Director(s) will not accept team weigh-in sheets prior to weigh-in or after the scales are closed. Failure to submit a completed team weigh-in sheet will result in that team receiving no TOTY points regardless of whether or not the team weighed fish.



The Tournament Director(s) will announce “Last Call” for tournament weigh- in three (3) times. If a member or member boat fails to weigh his or her fish by the third “Last Call,” the member’s or member boat’s total catch will be disqualified.

All Guaranteed Payouts are based on Sponsorships so they could change based on the Sponsorship levels.

Open Tournaments Payouts:

1st Place guaranteed \$1,000.00

Other payouts based on entries

Trophy Series Tournament Payouts:

1st Place guaranteed \$10,000.00

2nd-10th based on entries

Big Fish Side Pot 80% payback

Lady Angler \$500.00

Youth anglers

1st \$300

2nd \$200

3rd \$100



Additional Prizes are for Trophy Series members only:

TOTY \$TBD (based on entries and Sponsors)

TOP 25 Champion \$TBD (based on entries & memberships)

David Club Big Fish of the Year TBD

Lady Angler of the Year TBD

Youth angler Of the Year TBD

There will be a top 25 Championship Tournament for trophy series, there more details to come.

The top 25 Championship Tournament is winner take all format. The monetary amount will be based on sponsorship and 5% of entry fees and membership fees.

SBC CODE-OF-CONDUCT

GENERAL CONDUCT:

A. Each person joining the SBC will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the wholesome image of the organization. While the tournaments are highly competitive in nature, good sportsmanship must be paramount at all times. Members are expected to be role models. This is a family-oriented organization.

B. At no time shall any boat captains or crew make verbal or written contracts that effect the splitting or receiving of a percentage of a tournament prize or purse and/or Calcutta with another team or boat entered into the same event or the tournament trail itself. This practice sends the wrong message to newcomers and members not fishing on sponsored teams. Failure to conform will result in the



immediate forfeiture of all points for the season for all boats and members involved.

C. Captains are responsible for their crew or team members during all aspects of an event.

D. Demeaning another member's character or heritage will not be tolerated.

E. Verbal and/or threatening behavior, as well as public confrontations while participating as an SBC member is unacceptable.

F. Any member putting the welfare of the SBC and/or the general membership at risk with sponsors, potential sponsors, or pending sponsors, may be suspended from the SBC immediately by the SBC management present. The tournament Director must review and determine the final status of any member's privileges. See the section on Disqualification and Reinstatement for appropriate procedure and actions required.

UNDERSTANDING THE SBC RULES:

It is the responsibility of all SBC members to familiarize themselves with all the rules and regulations of this association and upon joining the association, agree to abide by said rules and regulations. Members also agree by joining said association, that all decisions of the SBC tournament Directors and/or the SBC management are final.

PUBLICITY AND LIABILITY RELEASE:

By registering as a member of the Striped Bass Challenge, Inc., the member consents to the use, without payment or restrictions, of any photographs and his or her name in which the member, his crew, and/or boat appears for any purpose whatsoever. The member further releases the Striped Bass Challenge, Inc., its officers, directors, board of trustees members, committee members, plus sponsors from and liability for libel, slander, loss, damage, negligence, injury, and/or death suffered by any member, family, crew, boat and/or other persons which may occur



during the term of membership.

TOURNAMENT & MEMBERSHIP DISQUALIFICATION / REINSTATEMENT:

When joining the Striped Bass Challenge, SBC members understand that all sanctioned tournaments belong to the tournament host organization, and by such, agree to abide by the tournament hosts rules and to accept the decisions of the tournament rules authority of the various tournament hosts. It is the responsibility of the SBC member to obtain and understand the rules of each tournament they participate in. If an angler is disqualified from an SBC tournament because of a rule violation, regardless of the severity of the violation, no member aboard the boat will receive points for that tournament. If a violation is of the magnitude that it could cause SBC membership privileges to be in jeopardy, the situation will be brought before the SBC Management. Any member having membership privileges revoked, will be disqualified from winning any prizes for the season including those prizes the member may have qualified for prior to the infraction. Any member with membership privileges revoked can petition to the SBC management for reinstatement, in writing.

In all cases, the decision of the SBC management will be final. The SBC has the right to refuse association membership to any person or persons.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND/OR ILLEGAL DRUGS PROHIBITED:

The use of alcoholic beverages during a tournament is prohibited by the management of the SBC. Anglers/Members are expected to practice good sportsmanship and because of the families fishing with us, are expected to set good examples. Abuse will cause disqualification. Members smoking, drinking, or wearing clothing that is deemed too dirty and/or inappropriate, or person's not wearing shirts, during picture taking or videotaping will not have their photo or video used to promote the SBC.



VHF RADIO:

Members are asked to practice common sense when using their VHF radio. Bad language with children possibly listening, poor sportsmanship, and the demeaning of other anglers on the radio may result in points not counting for that event, frequent abuse could result in expulsion from the association.

CONSERVATION:

The SBC promotes the goal of “Responsible Catch-and-Release” to improve the size structure of the striped bass population, while simultaneously promoting the “Catch-and-Keep” of fish during the periods when live release of larger stripers is impractical. To accomplish this goal, the SBC will continue to develop and promote the live release of tournament quality striped bass caught during tournaments when practical. Each and every SBC member is encouraged to practice and set examples of good conservation. On those few fisheries where natural reproduction has been documented, the SBC suggests that as a minimum, take only the fish that will be weighted and release the smaller fish

SBC 2026 TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

December 5-6 Santee Cooper lakes

January 9-10 Lake Hartwell

February 27-28 West Point

March 27-28 Lake Cherokee

April 24-25 Top 25 Championship (Lake TBD)